



Corrine Kenner shows off her new book, "Gently Haunted: True Stories from the Haunted Antique Shop," which will be available for purchase Thursday. Kenner says the book was inspired by her experiences with the spirits in her DeLand-based business. NIGEL COOK/NEWS-JOURNAL

Owner pens book about DeLand store's spirits

Haunted Antique Shop is topic of 'Gently Haunted'

Katie Kustura

Daytona Beach News-Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

DELAND — The spirits began making their presence known to the new owner of the shop about a month in.

Doors would open and close on their own; lights would turn on and off;

sometimes there were voices.

When Corrine Kenner took ownership of the circa-1920 craftsman bungalow at 612 W. New York Ave. about three and a half years ago, it was known as the Vintage Cottage.

These days it's the Haunted Antique Shop, and the book it inspired Kenner to write, "Gently Haunted: True Stories from the Haunted Antique Shop," comes out Thursday.

During a recent interview inside the shop, prior to the book release, Kenner

said she started doing research on the property after picking up on spirit activity.

Her original plan was to put a pamphlet together for customers wanting to know more about the spirits suspected of sticking around the shop, which served as a private residence in its previous life.

The more research Kenner did, the more the piece outgrew those original

See BOOK, Page 8A

Book

Continued from Page 1A

plans.

The coronavirus pandemic hit a little over a year into Kenner's owning the shop.

After being closed for two months at the beginning of the pandemic, Kenner decided she had nothing to lose by leaning into the other-worldly element.

The decision was a good one. "Business took off," Kenner said. "People love haunted stuff."

She said the specters that haunt the shop aren't scary, which is why she titled the book "Gently Haunted."

"The weird thing about hauntings or spirit activity is that in the moment they're not scary," Kenner said.

Resident wraiths

In her book, Kenner identifies a few of the spirits that seem to have stuck around the property.

Wanting a clearer picture of who's been haunting the shop, Kenner sought help from the West Volusia Historical Society with background research.

"We don't get many requests like that," Sarah Thorncroft, the nonprofit's executive director, said regarding researching suspected ghosts.

Thorncroft said while she hasn't personally experienced the kinds of things Kenner details in the book, she suspects the spirit of local historian Bill Dreggers, also known as Mr. DeLand, is still around.

"I think he's keeping tabs on us," Thorncroft said.

James and Lucinda DeWalt were the first residents of the home, which is part

of the West DeLand Residential District that made it to the National Register of Historic Places nearly 30 years ago.

In the book, Kenner writes she believes it's the voice of James DeWalt, who worked as a chauffeur, who multiple people have reported hearing.

"Everyone who hears him reports the same thing: James's voice is calm, quiet, and deep, like a baritone," Kenner writes.

She writes that James and Lucinda continue to enjoy the porch, as do Kenner and her husband, Dan.

"We almost never feel as though we're sitting there alone," Kenner writes.

There's also Annette Dennis, a music teacher who lived in the bungalow in the 1950s.

Kenner said she suspects Dennis of messing with the shop's sound system from time to time, especially if Kenner or one of her daughters tries to play anything modern.

Kenner said she has discovered that Dennis doesn't seem to mind Michael Bublé.

The shop's most-haunted artifacts, such as a set of vintage bride and groom dolls, are housed in the Cabinet of Curiosities.

Kenner writes that she named the dolls after a husband and wife, James and Rossie Hearne, who lived in the home in the 1930s.

The book also details other reportedly haunted sites throughout DeLand, including Stetson University and the Athens Theatre.

Tours and tarot readings

Throughout the shop, which also functions as a paranormal museum, there are additional items suspected of



The Cabinet of Curiosities inside the Haunted Antique Shop in DeLand contains some of the shop's most haunted pieces, according to owner and author Corrine Kenner. NIGEL COOK/NEWS-JOURNAL

being inhabited by spirits.

Visitors may sign up for tours or tour the shop at their own pace while listening to pre-recorded explanations.

The author also is an astrologer and certified tarot master.

Kenner said the first question she usually receives from customers is

about whether or not the shop is truly haunted.

"As soon as they know it's safe to talk about it, they start telling me their own ghost stories, which has been a really eye-opening experience for me," Kenner said.